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The Daily 202

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James Comey says he's more worried

about Trump than Russian disinformation campaigns

Former FBI director James Comey participates in a Washington Post Live event last year. (Kristoffer Tripplaar for The Washington Post)

BY JAMES HOHMANN
with Joanie Greve and Mariana Alfaro

THE BIG IDEA:

SAUSALITO, Calif. – Former FBI director Jim Comey pushed back on Bill Barr's claim that the U.S. government spied on President Trump's 2016 campaign as he pressed the attorney general to release special counsel Bob Mueller's report.

"I don't understand what the heck he's talking about," Comey said here on Thursday. "But when I hear that kind of language used, it's concerning because the FBI and the Department of Justice conduct court-ordered electronic surveillance. I have never thought of that as 'spying.' The reason I'm interested to know what he means by that is that, if the attorney general has come to the belief that that should be called 'spying,' then wow. That's going to require a whole lot of conversations inside the Department of Justice. I don't know of any court-ordered electronic surveillance aimed at the Trump campaign."

Comey fielded questions for an hour-and-a-half during a cybersecurity conference sponsored by the nonpartisan Hewlett Foundation on Cavallo Point, a former U.S. Army post just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. A few dozen technology industry leaders from Silicon Valley and national security insiders from Washington, plus some academics and journalists, are grappling over four days with a thicket of thorny tissues, from when it's appropriate to conduct offensive cyber operations against American adversaries to how social

media companies should balance consumer privacy with competing demands.

Testifying before a Senate panel on Wednesday, Barr said the Justice Department is reviewing the decisions made during the 2016 campaign – something Trump has pushed for since taking office. “I think spying did occur,” the attorney general said. “I’m not suggesting it was not adequately predicated, but I need to explore that. … Frankly, to the extent that there were any issues at the FBI, I do not view it as a problem that’s endemic to the FBI. I think there was probably a failure among a group of leaders there in the upper echelon.”

Comey, of course, launched the FBI’s investigation of Russian interference in 2016. He oversaw it until Trump fired him in May 2017. But Comey emphasized that he’s still trying to keep an open mind on Barr, who previously served as George H.W. Bush’s attorney general. “I think his career has earned him a presumption that he will be one of the rare Cabinet members who will stand up for things like truth and facts and institutional values,” Comey said. “Language like this makes it harder, but I still think he’s entitled to that presumption.”

Barr: ‘Spying did occur' during 2016 campaign

-- The 58-year-old Comey has also been in the news again this week because Trump has continued to attack him by name and refer to him as a “dirty cop.” “It was an illegal investigation. It was started illegally. Everything about it was crooked,” the president told reporters on Wednesday. “This was an attempted coup. This was an attempted takedown of a president, and we beat them. We beat them!”

Suzanne Spaulding, a former undersecretary at the Department of Homeland Security who is now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, asked Comey during Q&A with the audience about ongoing Russian efforts to manipulate American public opinion. “I’m worried that we may be missing the boat again around Russia’s attacks against the justice system that are ongoing to this day and that you have been a victim of,” she said. “Disinformation campaigns have targeted you, Mueller, DOJ and FBI but also courts, judges and prosecutors across the country. … How dangerous is it that Russia may be trying to erode confidence in our courts and our justice system? How do we get ahead of this?”

Comey said that he worries more about Trump in this regard than Russian President Vladimir Putin. “My mind actually doesn’t go to Russia first when I worry about that threat,” he said. “I’m sure Russia is engaged in efforts to undermine all manner of American institutions, but the president of the United States tweets lies about those institutions nearly every day. He does it so often that we’ve become numb to it. And there’s danger in that numbness. I wake up some mornings and the president’s tweeted I should be in jail. You know what I do? I laugh and I go, ‘Oh, there he goes again.’ I don’t follow him on Twitter, so I only see it if one of you retweets it. But I laugh. And that laughing is dangerous.”

Comey said there's "no conceivable basis" and there's nothing funny about Trump saying innocent Americans should be locked up. "There's not even an investigation of me," he said. "But the numbness is: Holy cow, the president of the United States is announcing that people should be in jail or that the FBI is corrupt! I haven't yet seen how he's going to navigate his belief that he was 'fully exonerated' by a 'corrupt' institution, but he'll navigate it somehow and he'll navigate it with lies. There's *tremendous* danger to us in our numbness. I'm sure you all feel it."

Trump says 'there was absolutely spying into my campaign'

An erosion of democratic norms is the threat within that keeps Comey up at night. “Every president makes false statements,” Comey said. “Barack Obama did it when he said if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. George W. Bush when he said there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. … We held them accountable because we measured their distance to the touchstone of the truth. And those two men spent the rest of their terms and probably the rest of their lives

explaining to us – *I know, I thought, I meant, I understood* – to explain the tether. There are so many lies coming at us now that there's a danger that the touchstone will just wash away and that we will stop measuring our leaders against the truth. It should be plural because the Republican Party bears some responsibility here."

Comey was a registered Republican for most of his adult life. He donated to the presidential campaigns of Mitt Romney and John McCain. Bush 43 appointed him as U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York and then deputy attorney general. Obama named him as FBI director.

To be sure, Comey emphasized that the U.S. is still not doing enough to counter the threat posed by the Kremlin. "A response to an attack on the United States requires that the commander-in-chief recognize it and understand it," he said. "Our fundamental problem is I don't see that our commander-in-chief acknowledges that it even happened. If you don't acknowledge that another nation attacked you, how can you possibly be doing enough to deal with it the next time? In fact, your silence is an invitation in many ways for them to do it again."

Bob Mueller departs St. John's Episcopal Church on March 24. (Cliff Owen/AP)

-- Comey said he accepts Barr's summary at face value that Mueller's investigation "did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities." But he noted that Barr's four-page letter said Mueller did find evidence of Russian interference.

“One of the good things about Barr’s letter is that it tells us – without even needing to read the Mueller report – that ‘the Russia thing’ was not a hoax, that it was real and that that assessment is backed by hard evidence,” Comey said, alluding to Trump’s acknowledgement in 2017 to NBC’s Lester Holt that he had the “Russia thing” on his mind when he fired Comey.

“We need to ask why our president won’t acknowledge what his intelligence community has found overwhelmingly,” he added. “You need to start there or else you have a situation where the great people who have sworn to protect the United States at lower levels in the government are having to act in the absence of presidential direction and in many ways in the face of presidential denial of a fundamental attack on the United States. I don’t think we’re adequately prepared and, in many ways, we’re inviting it to happen again by virtue of our president’s silence.”

-- Comey said the Russians will try to play aggressively again in the 2020 election. “It is true that the Russians came after us, and they are going to come again because they exceeded their wildest hopes,” he said. “They dirtied up our election, they damaged Hillary Clinton and, I don’t know what the causal relationship is, but Donald Trump was elected president.”

-- Comey said he’s especially concerned about what

Moscow did to fan the flames of racial discord inside the United States, and he hopes that the Mueller report illuminates some of the 2016 misinformation efforts vis-à-vis African Americans. (I wrote a Big Idea about this in December.)

Pointing to the charges that Mueller brought against the St. Petersburg-based Internet Research Agency, Comey said: “You see a lot in the indictment of the Russian actors that showed that their goal was to find our fault lines and to push on them to divide us. Obviously, things like guns are important fault lines, but I don’t know of a more important, fundamental, fault line in the United States – since before we were the United States – than race. It appears from the indictment that there was a concerted effort to exploit that fault line to make us hate along lines where we sometimes hate quickly without being pushed. But they pushed.”

Jim Comey announces in July 2016 that the bureau would not recommend criminal charges in its investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server while secretary of state. (Cliff Owen/AP)

-- Barr said on Wednesday that he's still on track to release an abridged version of the 400-page Mueller report early next week. He warned Congress in a letter on March 29th that he will redact sensitive information related to sources and methods, grand jury material, ongoing criminal cases and – most significantly –

information that “unduly” infringes upon the privacy and reputational interests of “peripheral third parties.” That fourth category gives Barr a lot of wiggle room to hold information back if he chooses to.

Comey urged Barr to err on the side of putting out as much information as possible about “key players” in the Russia probe and pointed to several precedents of the Justice Department weighing in publicly on people who weren’t indicted. In doing so, he defended his July 2016 announcement that Hillary Clinton would not be charged with a crime but that her use of a private email server had been “extremely careless.” Comey announced shortly before the election that he was reopening the investigation into Clinton because of new information and then said a few days later that he was closing it again. Clinton has blamed Comey, and his letters, for her defeat.

“The Department of Justice has long offered transparency about the conduct of uncharged individuals in cases of legitimate and extraordinary public interest,” Comey said. “They did it after Ferguson, Missouri. … I did it after I thought the Hillary Clinton investigation was completed. … The Department of Justice after the so-called IRS targeting of the tea party criticized the conduct of Lois Lerner but didn’t name and criticize the conduct of any lower-level people at the IRS. … She was a key player, and for the public to have

confidence that the department wasn't pulling its punches they needed to know the department's assessment of this key player. So they said it was poor judgment and bad management, but it didn't rise to the level of criminal conduct.

"That's very similar to what I said in the Hillary Clinton case," Comey continued. "To explain our judgment that this doesn't rise to the level of criminal conduct, we have to explain just what we think it is. Not to attack somebody or disparage them but to be transparent about the basis for this judgment. … You'll notice that I didn't talk about anybody else in that announcement in July 2016 except Secretary Clinton, and we tried not to name the people who set up the servers or the peripheral players. That's an important approach to these kinds of things that's consistent with the goal: The public needs to know enough to have confidence that this was done in the right way, and the public doesn't need to know about marginal players for that goal to be achieved."

William Barr testifies on Wednesday before a Senate Appropriations subcommittee. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

-- Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed Mueller as special counsel eight days after Comey's removal, also wrote the memo justifying Trump's decision to terminate the FBI director based on his handling of the Clinton case. In an interview with the Wall Street Journal yesterday, Rosenstein defended Barr's process. "He's being as forthcoming as

he can, and so this notion that he's trying to mislead people, I think is just completely bizarre," Rosenstein said.

-- Comey praised House Democrats for conducting rigorous oversight of the Trump administration. "Oversight by the third branch is essential," he said. "It's one of the reasons I thought it was so important that at least one house of Congress be controlled by a different party [in the 2018 midterm elections] because we were seeing, as Americans, no meaningful oversight. And the founders designed our system to have interests crashing against themselves. So it is a great thing, whether you're a Republican or a Democrat or neither, for there to be some crashing. I know because I've been subject to oversight when I've been in government that it's a pain in the neck, but it's a great pain in the neck. I believed that even when I was the one being overseen. It's a healthy thing for democracy in general."

Jim Comey arrives at the Rayburn House Office Building on Dec. 7 to testify privately before the House Judiciary and Oversight committees. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

-- Looking back, Comey said the U.S. government failed to appreciate how Russia intended to use the intelligence it was gathering in the run up to the 2016 election. “I think there was a fundamental miss there and an assumption that the extensive hacking activities that the U.S. and its allies saw … was traditional nation-state intelligence gathering,” Comey explained. “Had we known

at that point that it was actually … something very different, which was an intention to weaponize or attack the democratic processes of the United States, the government might have done something different to get out in front of that. We looked at that conduct and tried where we could to warn organizations without blowing our sources and methods. If we'd known they were stealing information in order to attack the American election in a year hence, I think we would have thought about and probably acted about it differently."

Susan Hennessey, a former lawyer for the National Security Agency who is now a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and moderated the discussion, asked what else Comey would do differently if he could go back in time to when what was supposed to be a 10-year term started in 2013. "Can I decline to accept the appointment as FBI director?" Comey asked.

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WHILE YOU WERE SLEEPING:

W. Samuel Patten leaves federal court in Washington last summer. (Jose Luis Magana/AP)

-- An American political consultant whose guilty plea marked the first confirmation that illegal foreign money was used to help fund Trump's inaugural committee was sentenced to probation Friday by a federal judge who cited his cooperation with prosecutors. Spencer Hsu reports: "W. Samuel Patten, 47, in August admitted steering $50,000 from a pro-

Russian Ukrainian politician to Trump's committee in an investigation spun off from [Mueller's] probe. … Patten acknowledged he was helped by a Russian national who is a longtime associate of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, and the case was referred to prosecutors with the U.S. attorney's office in Washington and the Justice Department's national security division. In sparing Patten from prison, U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson accepted prosecutors' request for leniency and noted no federal sentencing guideline directly applies to his offense of failing to register as a foreign lobbyist, which is punishable by up to five years in prison. Patten's defense sought probation citing the substantial assistance he provided in several ongoing, undisclosed investigations."

Ivanka Trump is recognized by President Trump on April 1 during an event in the East Room of the White House. (Susan Walsh/AP)

-- The Atlantic just posted a lengthy profile of Ivanka Trump and the rude awakening she faced in Washington when she joined the White House as a senior adviser. Elaina Plott got impressive access, including to POTUS: “In our conversation, the president wanted to be clear: He was very proud of all his children. … But Ivanka, whom he sometimes calls ‘Baby’ in official

meetings, is ‘unique.’ … No one understood what she had been brought on to do. Not even the president. During our interview, I asked Trump how he had envisioned Ivanka’s role. ‘So I didn’t know,’ he said without pause. ‘I’m not sure she knew.’” Other notable quotes from the piece:

- Don Jr., her brother: “She was loved by all the people in the world she wanted to be loved by. … I can’t say she’s not disappointed by them turning on her. After the election, I found 10,000 emails saying, ‘Hey buddy, we were with you all along,’ and I’m like, No you weren’t. ... I just think I figured it out a little bit earlier than she did that people were going to see us differently after my father won.”
- Jared Kushner, her husband: “She’s like her dad in that she’s very good at managing details. Her father is meticulous with details and has a great memory.”
- Ivana Trump, her mother, said Ivanka likes Melania Trump more than she did Marla Maples, her previous stepmother: “She likes her fine, because she didn’t cause me to break up the marriage like the other one — I don’t even want to pronounce her name.”

NASA astronaut Scott Kelly, left, and his identical twin, Mark, stand together before a news conference in Houston. (Pat Sullivan/AP)

GET SMART FAST:

1. **NASA published the results of its "twins study" with astronaut Scott Kelly and his twin brother, Mark, who is now a Senate candidate in Arizona.** Scott spent nearly a year on the International Space Station, while Mark remained on Earth's surface. Researchers who compared the health of the identical twins found that, while in space, Scott's body showed changes in gene expression and a heightened immune system as if it were under attack. (Joel Achenbach)
2. **An Israeli spacecraft appeared to crash into the moon's surface.** Israel had hoped to become the fourth country to ever land a spacecraft on the moon, but an apparent engine failure caused the mission to go awry in its final minutes. (Ruth Eglash)

3. **New York's efforts to quash a measles outbreak are causing tension with the city's Hasidic Jewish community.** The city sent 15 to 20 "disease detectives" into the insular community in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood to conduct interviews with members of the ultra-Orthodox Satmar sect, some of whom have refused to vaccinate their children. (Lenny Bernstein, Lena H. Sun and Gabrielle Paluch)
4. **Uber made its IPO filing public, revealing that its ride-hailing business has recently showed signs of leveling off.** Figures from the company, which is expected to begin trading in early May, shows that revenue remained little changed over the last half of 2018. (Wall Street Journal)
5. **A spring storm dumped up to 18 inches of snow in some spots from the Rockies to the Midwest.** Much of the Central United States is experiencing extreme temperatures and blizzard conditions. (Ian Livingston)
6. **It is almost impossible to find out who is behind some of the most popular children's channels on YouTube.** YouTube doesn't require content providers to identify themselves, fostering a "lack of accountability" amid content creators. (Wall Street Journal)
7. **Chicago is suing actor Jussie Smollett for the cost of the investigation into his allegations that**

he was attacked. The city's law department filed a lawsuit alleging that Smollett failed to meet a deadline to pay more than $130,000. (ABC7)

8. **A memorial service for the slain rapper Nipsey Hussle was held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.** Barack Obama wrote a letter to Hussle's family and friends, which was read to a crowd of thousands by the rapper's business partner Karen Civil. (Sonia Rao)

9. **"Rick" Singer, the man behind the college admissions scam, turned to rowing as his sport of choice because it has little fan or press scrutiny.** Singer helped get Mossimo Giannulli and Lori Loughlin's child into college as a fake rowing star, court documents show. (Los Angeles Times)

Trump criticizes ‘sanctuary cities’

THE IMMIGRATION WARS:

-- White House officials have tried to pressure U.S. immigration authorities to release detainees onto the streets of “sanctuary cities” to retaliate against Trump’s political adversaries, according to Department of Homeland Security officials and email messages reviewed by The Washington Post. Rachael Bade and Nick Miroff scoop: “Trump administration

officials have proposed transporting detained immigrants to sanctuary cities at least twice in the past six months — once in November, as a migrant caravan approached the U.S. southern border, and again in February, amid a standoff with Democrats over funding for Trump's border wall. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's district in San Francisco was among those the White House wanted to target, according to DHS officials.

"**The attempt at political retribution raised alarm within ICE**, with a top official responding that it was rife with budgetary and liability concerns, and noting that 'there are PR risks as well.' After the White House pressed again in February, ICE's legal department rejected the idea as inappropriate and rebuffed the administration. … A White House official and a spokesman for DHS sent nearly identical statements to The Post on Thursday, indicating that the proposal is no longer under consideration.

"**The White House believed it could punish Democrats — including Pelosi — by busing ICE detainees into their districts before their release**, according to two DHS whistleblowers who independently reported the busing plan to Congress. One of the whistleblowers spoke with The Washington Post, and several DHS officials confirmed the accounts. … According to both, there were at least two versions of the plan being considered. One was to move migrants who were already

in ICE detention to the districts of Democratic opponents. The second option was to bus migrants apprehended at the border to sanctuary cities, such as New York, Chicago and San Francisco.

"**Senior Trump adviser Stephen Miller discussed the proposal with ICE, according to two DHS officials.** Matthew Albence, who is ICE's acting deputy director, immediately questioned the proposal in November. Albence declined to comment but issued a statement through a spokesman acknowledging there was a discussion about the proposal. … DHS officials said the proposal resurfaced during the shutdown talks three months later, when Albence brought ICE attorneys into the discussion, seeking the legal review that ultimately doomed the proposal."

-- Pelosi's office calls the rebuffed proposal "despicable": "The extent of this administration's cynicism and cruelty cannot be overstated," said Ashley Etienne, a spokeswoman for the speaker. "Using human beings — including little children — as pawns in their warped game to perpetuate fear and demonize immigrants is despicable."

-- Albence will take over ICE today on an acting basis after Trump rescinded the nomination of Ron Vitiello because he was not "tough" enough, despite his decorated 30-year career in law enforcement.

“Albence, a career official and former ally of former ICE acting director Thomas Homan, has risen quickly under the administration and is seen as an official with the type of hardline approach that Trump may appreciate. It’s unclear how long Albence will remain in the leadership role,” BuzzFeed News’s Hamed Aleaziz notes. “**Albence became better known after his appearance on Capitol Hill on July 31 during which he [referred to] what ICE calls family residential centers as 'more like a summer camp.** These individuals have access to 24-7 food and water. ... There're basketball courts, exercise classes, soccer fields. ... In fact, many of these individuals, the first time they've seen a dentist is when they've come to one of our FRCs.’”

-- House Democrats don’t seem to have many remedies for the border crisis on their proposed agenda. Mike DeBonis and Bade report: “The lack of an easily articulated alternative to Trump’s hard-line border policy stands as a persistent challenge for Democrats both in Congress and on the presidential campaign trail as they approach the 2020 election cycle increasingly confident on other fronts, such as health care. … When asked about potential legislation aimed at stemming the crisis, Pelosi pointed to extra money for immigration-related agencies that Democrats negotiated into a February spending bill, lamenting that Trump ‘has not utilized what is in that specifically to the border.' … **Democratic leaders have made tentative plans for a**

House vote in the coming months on a bill to grant protections to the young undocumented immigrants known as 'dreamers,' as well as those residing in the U.S. under temporary refuge programs. … But that legislation does not address the border crisis."

Watch Trump praise WikiLeaks over and over again

ASSANGE ARRESTED:

-- The indictment of Julian Assange narrowly focuses on his alleged efforts to hack a Pentagon computer

— an apparent attempt by the Justice Department to avoid accusations of infringing on the First Amendment, which kept the Obama administration from charging the WikiLeaks founder. Rachel Weiner, Matt Zapotosky and Ellen Nakashima report: "American officials had debated bringing charges against [Assange] almost from the moment in 2010 that [WikiLeaks] dumped onto the Internet a historic trove of classified documents, including internal State Department communications and assessments of suspected terrorists at Guantanamo Bay. But through the years, the case languished. Some prosecutors reasoned that Assange was arguably a publisher, if a capricious one. Concerned that proving a criminal case against him would run up against the First Amendment and, if successful, set a precedent for future media prosecutions, the Obama administration chose to put the case aside. …

"**Under the federal law governing computer crimes, prosecutors faced a deadline to file charges within eight years of the 2010 disclosures that put him in their crosshairs. The single-count indictment unsealed in Alexandria federal court Thursday shows they did so just under the deadline.** It accuses Assange of conspiring to help former Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning crack a password so she could log on to a Defense Department computer anonymously. The indictment does not include evidence that Assange and Manning ever succeeded. Analysts said focusing

narrowly on that incident is a deft way of fending off criticism that the case puts news organizations in legal jeopardy."

-- Ecuador's decision to expel Assange from its British embassy reflects the country's political shift away from its former leftist leader. Kevin Sieff, Arelis R. Hernández and Gabriela Martinez report: "By Thursday, Ecuadoran officials eager to improve trade and other relations with the United States and exasperated by what they described as the WikiLeaks founder's overbearing presence had reached a decision. … The political scientist Joaquín Hernández said sympathy for Assange had dwindled in the nation of 17 million, where many had come to see him as a 'political imposition.' … The decision to grant refuge to Assange in 2012 was made by Moreno's predecessor, Rafael Correa, a leftist whose relationship with the United States had grown increasingly contentious."

-- Following Assange's arrest, Trump attempted to distance himself from WikiLeaks, which he repeatedly praised after the website posted hacked emails from Hillary Clinton's campaign. "I know nothing about WikiLeaks," Trump told reporters. "It's not my thing. I know there is something to do with Julian Assange. I've been seeing what's happened with Assange. And that will be a determination, I imagine, mostly by the attorney general." But according to an NBC

tally, Trump mentioned WikiLeaks 141 times at 56 events in the last month of the 2016 campaign. “WikiLeaks, I love WikiLeaks,” he said at the time. (John Wagner and Felicia Sonmez)

-- Hillary Clinton said Assange must “answer for what he has done.” Speaking at an event in New York, Clinton said Assange’s indictment “is not about punishing journalism, it is about assisting the hacking of a military computer to steal information from the United States government.” (CNN)

-- Assange’s mother accused British Prime Minister Theresa May of using her son to distract from “dog’s breakfast Brexit.” (The Telegraph)

-- Assange was arrested after smearing feces all over the walls of the Ecuadoran embassy, the nation’s interior minister revealed. (The Sun)

-- What will happen to Julian Assange’s cat? Reis Thebault investigates: “The asylum seeker’s furry friend was Assange’s only consistent companion during some of his lonely years as a self-styled political refugee. The cat had a significant Internet following of its own — though its views hewed suspiciously close to its human’s — and it was apparently a fixture at the embassy. … So when British police stormed the Ecuadoran Embassy, arrested Assange and took him into custody after a U.S.

federal court unsealed an indictment charging him with conspiracy, many worried about the fate of the feline. Would the cat's asylum end, too? Or was it just beginning? Would someone adopt it, or would it also face extradition to the United States? Would it fall victim to a vast conspiracy? Did it know too much? … While it's unclear exactly what happened to Embassy Cat, multiple sources have indicated that it long ago left its home."

MORE LEGAL INTRIGUE:

-- As expected, former Obama White House counsel Gregory Craig was charged with lying to the Justice Department about his lobbying work for the Ukrainian government, a case that grew out of Mueller's investigation. Rosalind S. Helderman and Tom Hamburger report: "The indictment stems from work Craig did with GOP lobbyist Paul Manafort while Craig was a partner at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, the law firm he joined after ending his tenure at the White House. … Craig called the prosecution 'unprecedented and unjustified.' … Craig was charged with two felony counts in connection with alleged false statements related to his Ukraine work. He allegedly made the statements to Justice Department officials who were evaluating whether he should have registered as a foreign agent and in a later interview with Mueller's prosecutors."

-- Federal prosecutors in Los Angeles charged Michael Avenatti, the former lawyer for Stormy Daniels, in a 36-count indictment that included allegations of stealing millions of dollars from clients. Mark Berman, Lindsey Bever and Devlin Barrett report: "The indictment was sweeping in its scope, accusing Avenatti of defrauding clients over a period spanning more than four years. The charges included bleak details, such as claims that Avenatti's alleged actions caused a paraplegic client to lose his Supplemental Security Income benefits, which are paid to adults and children with disabilities, and prevented the same client from using

settlement money to buy a home. Avenatti denied wrongdoing and wrote on Twitter that he will 'fully fight all charges and plead NOT GUILTY.' **The California case against him is separate from the federal case in New York accusing Avenatti of trying to extort Nike**, the sports apparel behemoth."

-- Carl Kline, the former White House official who's accused of overturning recommended denials for security clearances will appear before the House Oversight Committee this month. Kline was subpoenaed after a whistleblower in his office, Tricia Newbold, alleged that the White House granted security clearances to individuals whom some found unworthy. (Bade and Helderman)

-- Roger Stone impounded his car, moved to a one-room apartment and is now broke. He no longer talks to the president, whom he "really" misses. Oh, and his wife broke her ankle. The Sun-Sentinel's Anthony Man reports: "'The worst part of this is being broke,' he said. … 'I've lost my home, my insurance, what little savings I had, my ability to make a living because people pay me to write and talk, and of course the things they want me to write and talk about are the very things I'm not allowed to talk and write about. In the blink of an eye you can lose everything.'"

-- Ron Burkle, a billionaire investor with close ties to

Bill Clinton, is in talks to buy the National Enquirer. The principal owner of the tabloid's parent company is looking to sell the publication after it attracted the attention of federal investigators. The New York Times's Edmund Lee and Andrew Ross Sorkin report: "While representatives of The Enquirer, which is owned by American Media Inc., are deep in their negotiations with Mr. Burkle, the deal could still fall apart. ... Mr. Burkle, who specializes in buying distressed companies, made his initial fortune buying and selling supermarkets in California. … An acquisition of The Enquirer by Mr. Burkle, a longtime Democratic donor, could raise eyebrows in Washington given [Trump's] fondness for the tabloid."

-- In an op-ed for The Post, Jillian Sackler said she wants people to stop blaming her late husband for the opioid crisis: "My late husband, Arthur Sackler, who died in 1987, has been found guilty by association — along with the rest of what is referred to by the blanket designation 'the Sackler family' — because of some family members' association with Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin. Yet, like most families, the Sackler family is not a monolith. Neither Arthur nor his heirs had anything to do with the manufacture or marketing of OxyContin. Suggestions that his philanthropy is now somehow tainted are simply false. … Purdue Pharma in its current form was founded by Arthur's younger brothers, Mortimer and Raymond, four years after his

death. None of the 1,600-plus lawsuits filed against Purdue Pharma, members of the Sackler family or others in the opioid business names Arthur or his heirs as defendants."

Herman Cain speaks during Faith and Freedom Coalition's Road to Majority event in Washington. (Molly Riley/AP)

THE FEDERAL RESERVE:

-- At least four Senate Republicans have indicated

opposition to Herman Cain joining the Federal Reserve Board, effectively sinking his nomination and signaling growing GOP unease about Trump's efforts to remake the Fed. Damian Paletta, Josh Dawsey and Seung Min Kim report: "A strong ally of the president, Sen. Kevin Cramer (N.D.), on Thursday joined three other Republicans — Sens. Mitt Romney (Utah), Lisa Murkowski (Alaska) and Cory Gardner (Colo.) — in announcing opposition to Cain's appointment to the Fed. Republicans control 53 votes in the 100-seat Senate, and losing the support of four members means Cain would need help from Democrats, which appears unlikely. … As word of the Senate backlash moved through the White House late Thursday, the long odds of confirmation became clear, according to two people briefed on the talks. It also became increasingly likely that Cain would not be formally nominated by Trump after all because the Senate support never materialized." (According to ABC News and other outlets, Cain is expected to withdraw from consideration.)

A surreal scene: Referencing Cain's pithy tax proposal, Trump recently told military leaders they needed to come up with a "9-9-9" plan to address the situation at the border. "Trump recently gathered with generals and other military leaders for a meeting about the Mexican border. ... At the meeting, which was held in the White House Situation Room, an aide passed Trump a note informing him that Cain was in the building. Trump

summoned Cain to the meeting, and then told the military brass that they needed to come up with a ‘9-9-9’ plan for the border. The joke fell flat.”

-- Trump's other nominee for the Fed, Stephen Moore, insisted on CNN that he's never supported the gold standard. Then the host played a video montage of Moore advocating repeatedly for the gold standard in recent years. Moore, who has been criticized for changing his views about monetary policy based on which party is in power, said he's changed his mind:

-- Fed Chair Jerome Powell made a show of his independence from the president during a private meeting on Thursday with House Democrats during their retreat. Mike DeBonis and Bade report: “Powell told Democrats about how he viewed his role as Fed leader as apolitical in overseeing the nation’s economy. Politics, he said, don’t influence his decisions on when to raise interest rates. ‘We’re strictly nonpartisan,’ Powell said. ‘We check our political identification at the door.’ … While he shied away from policy questions almost the entire

evening, Powell said it would be ‘unthinkable’ that the United States would default on its debt ceiling payments — a comment some took as a warning not to play chicken with the nation’s credit. Powell also noted that no other country has a debt limit — they simply appropriate money — echoing an argument often made by lawmakers who want to eliminate the U.S. debt ceiling, including many Democrats.”

-- But, but, but: The White House will now require that the Fed and other independent agencies submit new guidelines for review, a controversial step that has long been a goal of conservative groups. “The step could have the effect of nullifying or blocking a range of new regulatory initiatives, and it could have blocked guidelines issued by the Fed and other bank regulators in 2013 that sought to limit the amount of risky corporate loans issued by banks,” Paletta reports. “The increased scrutiny would also apply to other agencies and issues, including the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Federal Election Commission and the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. … Giving the White House the power to subject an agency’s guidance to congressional review would give the Trump administration much more influence over how the Fed and other agencies interact with businesses.”

President Trump meets with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in the Oval Office. (Evan Vucci/AP)

THE NEW WORLD ORDER:

-- Trump, in a meeting with South Korea's leader Moon Jae-in, signaled an openness to a smaller nuclear deal with North Korea. David Nakamura reports: "Asked if he would accept a 'smaller deal' that fell short of that goal to keep talks going, Trump responded: 'I'd have to see what the deal is. There are various

smaller deals that could happen. . . . You could work out step-by-step pieces, but at this moment we're talking about the big deal. The big deal is we have to get rid of nuclear weapons.' … The president said that a third summit 'could happen,' but he did not offer a timeline and added that the negotiations are 'step-by-step' and 'not a fast process.'"

-- Sudan toppled its leader in the same way he gained power 30 years ago: through a military coup. Muhammed Osman and Max Bearak report: "Omar Hassan al-Bashir's downfall, however, did not come with the flying bullets or middle-of-the-night escapes many expected from a leader who survived numerous past crises. Instead, his ouster was precipitated by the biggest peaceful demonstrations in a generation, culminating in a vast sit-in attended by hundreds of thousands in the capital, Khartoum. … Sudanese Defense Minister Awad Ibn Auf declared on state radio the establishment of a two-year transitional government administered by the military with him in charge, adding that the constitution was suspended, that a three-month state of emergency was in effect and that a curfew had been imposed."

-- Pakistan fears tensions could worsen with India, its nuclear rival, as elections in the neighboring nation begin. Pamela Constable reports: "Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan, in an interview Tuesday with foreign journalists, expressed concern and sorrow over the

deterioration in relations with India. He said the Modi government was unleashing domestic hostility against Muslims, a minority of more than 200 million, and that the very idea of 'Muslim-ness' was under attack. Nevertheless, Khan also suggested that if Modi were to win reelection, his 'right-wing' government might be more likely to reach a settlement on Kashmir, which both countries have claimed since they were partitioned in 1947. The opposition Congress party, he said, might be 'too scared' to move decisively on the issue."

-- Lawmakers in both parties questioned Trump's $2 billion proposal to create a Space Force to weaponize space. Missy Ryan reports: "Acting defense secretary Patrick Shanahan, Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other Pentagon leaders appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee to argue for the creation of Trump's proposed Space Force. But Sen. James M. Inhofe (R-Okla.), the Republican committee chairman, asked a question heard throughout the more-than-two-hour hearing: 'What will [this] organization fix?' … In the House, Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), who chairs the House Armed Services Committee, has said he does not support the proposal as written, complaining that it is too expensive and too bureaucratic. … He is not alone in that assessment. Even House Republicans are unsatisfied with the administration's Space Force proposal as presented, Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Tex.) told reporters."

Sens. Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) toast each other after senators reached an agreement to end the three-day government shutdown in January 2018. (Andrew Harnik/AP)

2020 WATCH:

-- Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) endorsed his Republican colleague Susan Collins (Maine) in her expected reelection bid. Colby Itkowitz reports: “Though Collins has not officially announced that she’s running for

another term to represent Maine in the Senate, it's widely assumed that she will. Democrats consider flipping her seat key to winning the Senate majority. … Manchin called Collins a 'dear friend' and said he'd go to Maine to campaign for her if she asked. … Manchin's support for her is essentially saying he's willing to risk the Democrats' chance of taking the Senate. **Collins received another bout of good political news Thursday when Susan Rice, who was the United Nations ambassador in ... Obama's administration, said she is not going to run for Collins's seat."**

-- Joe Biden continues to draw blistering press coverage over his past opposition to busing as a means of desegregating schools. Newly uncovered letters show that, during his first term in the Senate, Biden repeatedly sought the support of the late senator James Eastland, a well-known and vociferous segregationist. "Dear Mr. Chairman," Biden wrote to Eastland, who frequently spoke of African Americans as "an inferior race," in 1977. "I want you to know that I very much appreciate your help during this week's committee meeting in attempting to bring my anti-busing legislation to a vote." (CNN)

-- In the latest of a long line of policy proposals from Elizabeth Warren's campaign, the senator from Massachusetts said she would impose new corporate taxes on companies with profits over $100 million.

NBC News's Benjy Sarlin reports: "The 2020 presidential hopeful said her 'real corporate profits tax' is aimed at companies that report large annual gains but pay little in taxes thanks to a variety of tax credits and deductions that are available to lower their overall bill. … Under Warren's plan, companies would have to pay a 7 percent tax on profits over $100 million that would stack on top of their other federal taxes. … Warren argued her approach was better than raising the corporate tax rate — which was cut to 21 percent from 35 percent under Trump — because it would prevent companies from using various breaks to reduce or zero out the new tax."

-- Related: In the first year after the Republican tax cuts went into effect, the number of companies paying no taxes doubled. According to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the number of companies reporting that their federal tax rates amounted to effectively zero, or less than zero, jumped from an average of 30 in past years to 60 in 2018. (NBC News)

-- Warren doesn't like to talk about it, but she was a registered Republican for years before leaving the GOP to become the liberal firebrand she is today. Politico's Alex Thompson reports: "It was not until 1996 — when Warren was 47 years old and a newly minted Harvard law professor — that she changed her registration from Republican to Democrat. … The story of Warren's awakening — from a true believer in free

markets to a business-bashing enforcer of fair markets; from a moderate Republican who occasionally missed an election to one of the most liberal senators in America vying to lead the Democratic Party — breaks the mold of the traditional White House contender and is key to understanding how she sees the world: with a willingness to change when presented with new data, and the anger of someone who trusted the system and felt betrayed."

-- Centrist Democrats fear far-left policies will lead to a Trump win in 2020, so they're floating alternatives. Michael Scherer and Matt Viser report: "The moderate pushback has been accelerated by the growing voices of a more centrist class of Democratic presidential contenders that includes former Colorado governor John Hickenlooper, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (Minn.) and former Texas congressman Beto O'Rourke, as well as expected announcements from former vice president Joe Biden and Sen. Michael F. Bennet (Colo.). All have promised campaigns that will appeal to liberals without dramatically expanding the federal role in the economy. Instead of the government health care for all proposed by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), they are pushing public options or marginal Medicare expansions. Instead of colossal government spending to solve climate change, they are offering market-based solutions. Instead of heavy taxes on the ultrarich, they are focused on closing loopholes and expanding tax breaks for the middle class."

-- Another poll showed Pete Buttigieg gaining traction in Iowa. According to Monmouth University, Buttigieg is now in third place in the caucus state. He attracted 9 percent of the vote in the poll, only trailing Joe Biden (27 percent) and Bernie Sanders (16 percent). He's also been rising in New Hampshire polling, underscoring how fluid the race remains. (Politico)

-- The Democratic National Committee is launching a new "war room" aimed at defeating Trump in 2020 that focuses on how he has allegedly failed to follow through on important promises to local communities. NBC News's Heidi Przybyla reports: "Responding to criticism that Democrats were too focused on Trump's temperament and personal attributes during Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign, the party's main organizing arm says it's making a major expansion of its opposition research team that will be 'hyper-focused' on the impact of Trump's policies on local communities. A team of several dozen staffers have compiled an archive of thousands of documents obtained through local news and Freedom of Information Act requests that will be used to spotlight promises Trump made during visits to specific communities — and to 'put a human face' on what's happened since then."

This messaging from the DNC would directly confront the president's planned theme for his reelection bid of "promises kept," as Toluse

Olorunnipa and Dawsey reported last month. Trump has replaced "his 2016 'Make America Great Again' slogan with 'Keep America Great!' and [told] his supporters to chant 'Finish the wall' instead of 'Build the wall,' even though no section of his promised border wall has actually been built."

-- Gender differences in views about Trump's job performance and the size and scope of government have widened. Pew's Hannah Hartig reports: "In a new Pew Research Center survey, nearly six-in-ten women (58%) say they prefer a bigger government providing more services to a smaller government providing fewer services (36%). Among men, the balance of opinion is nearly the reverse: 59% of men prefer a smaller government (37% prefer bigger). The gender differences on this measure are as wide as at any point in more than a decade. … There are wider differences between men and women in views of Trump's job performance than for any president dating to George H.W. Bush. Currently, 47% of men say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president, with an equal share saying they disapprove (47%). By contrast, 32% of women say they approve of how Trump is handling his job as president; 63% say they disapprove."

-- Trump shared an inaccurate graphic on Twitter that overstated his job approval by 12 percentage points. John Wagner reports: "The graphic, produced by the Fox

Business Network and aired on ‘Lou Dobbs Tonight,’ indicated that Trump’s overall job approval was 55 percent while his approval on handling the economy was 58 percent. The figure on the economy was correct, but the accurate overall approval figure was 43 percent in the poll cited, which was conducted for the Georgetown University Institute of Politics and Public Service. Trump’s overall job approval has been stagnant in that poll. In March 2018, it was 42 percent. In August 2017, it was 43 percent.”

‘Some people did something:’ Rep. Omar’s remarks in context

MORE ON THE NEW CONGRESS:

-- Sens. Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer exchanged verbal blows as they gave dueling accounts over who’s to blame for the Senate’s impasse over what was supposed to be a simple disaster-aid bill. Politico’s John Bresnahan, Burgess Everett and Marianne Levine report: “Schumer first accused McConnell of overseeing a ‘legislative graveyard,’ adding that McConnell’s Senate deserved an F. McConnell responded hours later that Schumer was the father of gridlock, having blocked George W. Bush‘s judicial picks more than a decade ago. ‘I know exactly who started it,’ McConnell said. Then Congress promptly left town for a two-week recess, frustrating members in both parties, who lamented the state of the Senate and said they hoped the situation couldn’t get worse. But it just might, senators from both parties admitted.”

-- The New York Post was criticized for using 9/11 to attack Rep. Ilhan Omar over her speech on Islamophobia. Eli Rosenberg reports: “Omar (D-Minn.) had made brief remarks about Islamophobia at an event in March. ... But after video of the event was published this week, conservative figureheads fixated on the way she had phrased a reference to 9/11, as ‘some people did something.’ The New York Post took the controversy, which had percolated for days in conservative circles, and

amplified it by splashing it across its cover Thursday with a photo of the twin towers. … Many felt the newspaper, which has a history of incendiary front pages, had overstepped the bounds of acceptability."

-- Omar is also facing a surge in death threats from conservatives angry at her comments. Instagram has said it will not ban far-right personality Laura Loomer from spewing hate speech against Omar in its platform, the Daily Beast's Kelly Weill reports: On Instagram, Loomer used the clip of Omar's speech "to call for the criminalization of Muslims in political office. … Calling Islam a 'cancer,' Loomer told followers that 'Muslims should not be allowed to seek positions of political office in this country. It should be illegal.' She went on to claim that Omar and [Michigan Democratic Rep. Rashida] Tlaib, the first two Muslim women in Congress, would help throw away the Constitution and implement 'an Islamic caliphate ... because of who they are, because they are Muslims.' An Instagram spokesperson told The Daily Beast that Loomer's Instagram story violated its policies against hate speech, which prohibit attacks on people based on their religion, but it declined to ban Loomer over her violation. Instead, Instagram said it would ban accounts that repeatedly violated their rules."

-- Pelosi said Silicon Valley's self-regulating days "probably should be over." Recode's Eric Johnson

reports: “Pelosi said Silicon Valley is abusing the privilege of section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, which says that internet companies are not responsible for what is posted on their platforms. … ‘230 is a gift to them, and I don’t think they are treating it with the respect that they should,’ she said. ‘And so I think that that could be a question mark and in jeopardy. ... For the privilege of 230, there has to be a bigger sense of responsibility on it, and it is not out of the question that that could be removed.’”

SOCIAL MEDIA SPEED READ:

A former National Security Council and State Department official weighed in on Assange's arrest:

From top national security journalist Walter Pincus, former Post journalist and current Cipher Brief columnist:

From the journalist who helped lead The Post's Snowden coverage:

Sean Hannity appeared to cut his social media ties to WikiLeaks:

One of Trump's top advisers crowed about the indictment of a former Obama administration official, seeming to forget about former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn:

A CNN reporter reflected on the current news cycle:

A veteran Republican strategist who worked for George W. Bush's 2004 reelection campaign mocked Rep. Tom Massie's attacks on John Kerry for studying political science at Yale, which the Kentuckian described as pseudo-science:

Former Virginia governor Terry McAuliffe, who once wrestled an alligator to secure a donation to Jimmy

Carter's reelection campaign, stoked 2020 speculation with this tweet:

Joe Biden complimented a former Republican governor and Trump rival:

A 2020 candidate was given a lesson on alternative forms of milk in Iowa, per an AP reporter:

A presidential historian marked this somber anniversary:

A Post reporter commented on a former Republican congressman's new job:

Female lawmakers celebrated the work of Katie Bouman, the 29-year-old scientist who made it possible to capture the first direct image of a black hole:

From a news writer for the journal Nature:

Even Barbie congratulated the young astrophysicist:

The House Intelligence Committee chairman tweeted this photo of himself with celebrities John Legend and Chrissy Teigen:

A conservative commentator replied by editing the congressman's close-up face into various moments from history:

And Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y) apparently wowed her Democratic colleagues while playing trivia:

GOOD READS FROM ELSEWHERE:

-- New York magazine, "'The Unthinkable Has Happened,'" excerpted from Jayson Greene's new book about the death of his 2-year-old daughter: "We know Greta is going to die, all of us, although we haven't allowed the thought into our conscious minds yet. None of us is ready for it to maraud through our subconscious, killing and burning everything it sees. But we hear the banging at the gates. We glance around us, realizing this

is the last we'll ever see of the world as we've known it. Whatever comes next will raze everything to the ground."

-- The New Yorker, "Bret Easton Ellis Thinks You're Overreacting to Donald Trump," a Q&A by Isaac Chotiner: "Ellis's first work of nonfiction, 'White,' is an interlocking set of essays on America in 2019, combining memoir, social commentary, and criticism; more specifically, it's a sustained howl of displeasure aimed at liberal hand-wringers, people obsessively concerned with racism, and everyone who is not over Donald Trump's election. His targets range from the media to Michelle Obama to millennials (including his boyfriend). Ellis also defends less popular people, from Roseanne Barr to Kanye West, whom he perceives as having been given a raw deal by the mob. ... Ellis and I recently spoke by phone. During our conversation, which has been edited for length and clarity, we discussed how people respond to allegations of sexual assault, whether the President is a racist, and why he finds liberal outrage so annoying."

HOT ON THE LEFT:

A Texas bill would punish women who have abortions with the death penalty. Isaac Stanley-Becker

HOT ON THE RIGHT:

"Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signs 'heartbeat' abortion ban, ACLU promises to sue," from the

reports: “The legislation is the brainchild of state Rep. Tony Tinderholt, a Republican from Arlington, Tex., who was placed under state protection because of death threats he received when he first introduced the bill in 2017. The Air Force veteran, who has been married five times, argues that the measure is necessary to make women ‘more personally responsible.’ He said Tuesday that his intention is to guarantee ‘equal protection’ for life inside and ‘outside the womb.’ Some of his supporters see the issue in even more

Cincinnati Enquirer: “Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine signed one of the nation's most restrictive abortion bans into law Thursday afternoon and opponents have already pledged to take him to court. DeWine, a Republican, said government’s role should be to protect life from beginning to end. … The American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio and Ohio abortion providers have already promised to sue over the legislation, which would ban abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected and criminalize doctors who perform them anyway. A fetal

fateful terms. ‘God’s word says, ‘He who sheds man’s blood, by man — the civil government — his blood will be shed,’’ said Sonya Gonnella, quoting the Book of Genesis and asking lawmakers to ‘repent with us.’

heartbeat can be detected as early as six weeks into a woman's pregnancy, which can be before a woman finds out she's pregnant. The so-called ‘heartbeat bill’ passed the GOP-controlled Legislature Wednesday amid protests from advocates of abortion access.”

DAYBOOK:

Trump will receive his intelligence briefing and deliver a speech about 5G deployment in the United States before meeting with the Fraternal Order of Police executive board.

Looking ahead: Trump announced in the Oval Office yesterday that he would travel to Normandy, France, in June for the 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion. (Felicia Sonmez)

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

Mike Pence, who worked with Pete Buttigieg when he was serving as governor of Indiana, admonished the South Bend mayor for critical comments about his record on gay rights. The vice president told CNBC: “He said some things that are critical of my Christian faith and about me personally, and he knows better. … He knows me.” (Isaac Stanley-Becker)

NEWS YOU CAN USE IF YOU LIVE IN D.C.:

-- This will be a warm and mainly dry weekend despite a few showers here and there. The Capital Weather Gang forecasts: “It’s cloudier than not through the weekend, but showers and storms may be spread far enough apart that it ends up mostly dry. Forecast confidence isn’t high, since the atmosphere isn’t certain exactly when and for how long it wants to rain. The most likely windows for rain are tonight and late Sunday. Setting aside rain chances, temperatures remain comfortably warm through the weekend.”

-- The Capitals beat the Hurricanes 4-2 in the first game of the playoffs, taking their first step in

defending their Stanley Cup. (Isabelle Khurshudyan, Samantha Pell and Neil Greenberg)

-- Georgetown University students are pushing to create a reparations fund for the descendants of slaves. Susan Svrluga reports: "'We're setting the example for others to step up — not just our university, but universities across the country, to save history,' said Shepard Thomas, a junior from Louisiana who is a direct descendant of enslaved people, the sale of whom helped save Georgetown from bankruptcy. ... They proposed a student fee to begin in fall 2020 of $27.20 per semester. It would raise an estimated $400,000 the first year and increase with inflation. A nonprofit organization led by a board of students and descendants would donate money to charitable causes directly benefiting descendants of the 19th-century sale of enslaved people."

-- D.C. police are searching for a group of Airbnb renters who allegedly stole items worth thousands of dollars and broke furniture from a Kalorama home. The March incident once again cast a spotlight on how the home rental service could be exploited at the expense of property owners. (Dana Hedgpeth)

VIDEOS OF THE DAY:

Jimmy Kimmel mocked Trump for suggesting that America is very lucky that he is president:

Seth Meyers discussed the different ways Trump has dodged questions on the Mueller report:

Trevor Noah wondered why British officers carried WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange out of the Ecuador embassy:

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